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LETTER DATED 8 AUGUST 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CROATIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter dated 8 August 1995 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Mate Granić, addressed to you (see annex).

I would kindly request your assistance in circulating the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 8 August 1995 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Croatia addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to inform you that the military and police operation aimed at establishing constitutional order, the rule of law and public safety in the formerly designated Sectors North and South, and aimed at breaking the three-year long siege and joint offensive of the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs against the United Nations Safe Area was successfully completed after 84 hours, at 6 p.m. Central European Time, on 6 August 1995.

The operation has achieved all its strategic and tactical aims, as elaborated in my letter of 4 August 1995, with minimal loss of civilian life.

Only police and security activities in restricted areas on a minor scale are still under way in the recently liberated areas of the Republic of Croatia.

The military and police operation aimed at establishing sovereignty over occupied parts of Croatia's territory has been conducted strictly in accordance with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and under specific and explicit orders to limit to the absolute minimum civilian casualties and damage to property, as well as to protect the lives and to the maximum possible extent ensure the safety of the personnel of the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation (UNCRO) in the given circumstance.

The Croatian Government deeply regrets the unfortunate incidents involving the UNCRO personnel, including the loss of life of three United Nations peace-keepers. All such incidents are being thoroughly investigated. The UNCRO officials and troop-contributing countries have been informed of both the initial findings and the subsequent measures taken against those who allegedly violated these standing orders and the Army's Military Code of Conduct.

Following 1,201 days of being under siege, the humanitarian situation in the Bihać area is being improved by the hour. Owing to the successfully completed joint military operation of the two neighbouring countries, President Alija Izetbegović was today able to visit the Bihać area, after having met with President Tudjman in Zagreb.

A special convoy consisting of 20 trucks containing essential foodstuffs and other humanitarian items, named the Federation Convoy, has left Zagreb.

A humanitarian convoy of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will also be directed to Bihać, and to Banja Luka. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has also been granted permission by the Croatian Government to use its facilities to send relief and humanitarian assistance to Banja Luka by plane.

Life in the newly liberated areas is slowly but increasingly getting back to normal. Local civilian authority is being re-established, communications are

being restored, and people have begun to return to their homes after four years of displacement.

To facilitate the overall normalization of life and reconciliation in the liberated territories, an agreement was signed by the Head of the Cabinet of the President of the Republic, Mr. Hrvoje Šarinić, and the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, on 6 August 1995. The agreement provides and guarantees the UNCRO and international humanitarian organizations complete access to the area, including monitoring of the human rights situation. A similar arrangement has been reached with the European Union (EU) Monitoring Mission.

The Government of Croatia sincerely hopes that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Bosnian Serb authorities will pose no obstacles for the safe return of those Croatian citizens of Serb ethnic origin willing to do so.

Under the arrangement with Mr. Akashi, the Croatian Government has agreed to permit the unimpeded departure of civilians from the previously occupied areas, with the assistance of international humanitarian organizations and in accordance with their rules and procedures. However, it is the hope of my Government that many of the Croatian Serbs will decide to remain in or return to their homes.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia will ensure the full realization of all human and minority rights for those who will choose to stay in Croatia as their homeland. These rights are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, the Constitutional Law on Human Rights and Freedoms and the Rights of National and Ethnic Communities or Minorities in the Republic of Croatia, and the existing laws of the democratic Republic of Croatia, which are in complete accord with the highest European standards of human and minority rights.

Despite the repeated appeals by the President of the Republic, Dr. Franjo Tudjman and the Croatian Government to the local Serbian population to lay down their arms and stay in their homes, as well as promises and guarantees of amnesty and abolition to all those who have not committed war crimes, and renewed guarantees for the safety and constitutional rights of the Serb ethnic community in Croatia, a large number of Serb civilians in the liberated areas have left their homes. This departure has been instigated and organized well in advance of the commencement of the operation and carried out by the local Serb authorities. That this was a highly organized evacuation can be testified to by the number of totally deserted towns and villages which Croatian military and police forces entered.

It should be stressed that the cooperation of UNCRO, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and Serb authorities is needed considering the number of people on the move: maybe as many as 90,000 civilians and 30,000 armed men.

Unfortunately, I must also report that several Croatian towns, especially Osijek, Vinkovci, Županja and Dubrovnik, have recently been subjected to further indiscriminate attacks and bombardment from Serb positions in the occupied

Croatian territories of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Srijem, as well as from areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina under Serb control. Particularly dangerous was the attack by Bosnian Serb planes against the chemical plant in Kutina of 7 August 1995, which could have had extremely severe consequences or even caused an ecological disaster.

The Government of Croatia appeals to the Security Council and the international community in general to exert increased pressure on the Belgrade regime and the Bosnian Serbs to stop these acts of terrorism, violence, aggression and occupation.

Additional concerns arise from the fact that the majority of the troops in the Croatian occupied territories in the Vukovar region consist of regular units of the Army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), who are constantly being rotated and strengthened directly by the Belgrade regime. The scale of those violations is confirmed in the Secretary-General's report, S/1995/650, of 3 August 1995.

The Government of Croatia reiterates its firm commitment to the search for a peaceful, negotiated solution for the reintegration of the occupied territories and a lasting and viable settlement to the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In line with this, the Government of Croatia will continue to cooperate fully with the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the United Nations Special Envoy for Croatia, the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, the Contact Group, and all friendly countries interested in a just and lasting peace in south-eastern Europe. The Government of Croatia in this connection expects that efforts will be made for the full implementation of the existing UNCRO mandate in the areas of Croatia still under Serbian occupation, especially in regard to establishing full and effective control of the Croatian international border line with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

The Government of the Republic of Croatia sincerely hopes that completing the reintegration of Croatia's occupied territories will be achieved through political means and attaches special importance to constructive negotiations with the Serbs and their legitimate representatives. The Croatian Government further hopes that in completing this task it will enjoy the full assistance and support of all relevant international factors.

(Signed) Mate GRANIĆ